

## COVID-19

# Frequently Asked Questions for Workplaces

This document was updated August 17, 2020. Please [visit our website](#) for the most current guidance.

Barry and Eaton county businesses and entities remaining open must follow the guidelines set forth in the Governor's Executive Orders [2020-36](#), [2020-109](#), [2020-110](#), and [2020-114](#) to ensure the safety of employees and customers.

### Barry-Eaton District Health Department recommends:

- Screen workers. Check employees for fever or other symptoms if they will enter facilities or buildings.
- Any employee with symptoms must stay home or work remotely.
- Maintain 6 feet of distance between people.
- Emphasize frequent and proper hand washing. Make sure sinks are well supplied with warm running water, soap and paper towels.
- Supply masks to all employees. Encourage employees to wear masks, particularly if they will be in close contact with other employees or the public. Cloth masks are acceptable, as surgical masks should be reserved for those in health care.
- Do not share space or equipment. If this is not possible, have employees wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after using shared equipment. Clean and sanitize equipment between uses.
- Work remotely whenever possible, particularly if individuals have underlying health conditions.

## Social distancing

### How do I determine a good social distance from another person?

Social distancing means keeping at least 6 feet apart from another person.

### What does 6 feet look like?

Six feet is equivalent to two Golden Retrievers standing nose to tail, the average width of a sedan, the length of a sofa or mattress, or two arm lengths extended.

## Screening

### What screening questions should I ask my employees?

Employees should be asked about [symptoms](#) of fever, cough (excluding chronic cough due to medical reason other than COVID-19), shortness of breath, sore throat, or diarrhea (excluding diarrhea due to known medical reason other than COVID-19). These symptoms can be accompanied by chills, shivering, muscle aches, headaches, or new smell or taste disorders. In some cases, these additional symptoms can be the only symptoms present. Any symptom that is unusual for the person is reason for concern.

Employees should also be asked about close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual, and about international travel. Food-selling establishment and pharmacy workers should be asked about any travel outside of Michigan.

### Do I have to take the temperature of all my employees?

No. We do recommend the use of a touchless thermometer, if available, to screen employees for fever. A fever is considered 100.4°F or above. The person taking the temperature should wear a mask, if the employee is not taking their own temperature.

If thermometers are not available, employees can take their own temperature at home or can report if they feel feverish ("subjective fever"). Note that not everyone who is infected with COVID-19 develops a fever, so it is critical that employees are asked symptom-related questions even if you take temperatures.

## What are the quarantine rules for workers who have traveled?

**Food-selling establishment\*** and **pharmacy workers** ([under EO 2020-109](#)) must self-quarantine at home for 14 days following travel outside of Michigan, unless that travel was due to commuting from a home location outside of Michigan, or unless that travel was related to supply chain and critical infrastructure work (meaning the worker traveled for work purposes). Employees who have traveled but who are still allowed to work should wear a mask at work for 14 days following travel.

**Other workers traveling domestically** may continue to work with no restrictions, unless travel was to an area with high COVID-19 spread. These employees should work from home, if possible.

**Any worker traveling internationally** should self-quarantine at home for 14 days after returning.

## What are the quarantine rules for workers who had close contact to a COVID-19 positive individual?

**Food-selling establishment\*** and **pharmacy workers** ([under EO 2020-109](#)), and **workers at a health care facility, first responders** (e.g., police officers, fire fighters, paramedics), **child protective service employees, workers at child caring institutions, and workers at correctional facilities** ([under EO 2020-36](#)) who have had close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual *may be allowed to continue to work* at the employer's discretion if they remain asymptomatic. These employees are encouraged to wear a mask.

**Other workers** ([under CDC guidelines](#)) who have had close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual must self-quarantine at home for 14 days past the last date of close contact.

## If I have had close contact with someone COVID-19 positive, can I just get a test and go back to work instead of quarantine for 14 days?

The employee must finish 14 days of quarantine, as we don't know where a person is in their incubation period.

## One of our employees just tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?

Instruct the employee to stay home and self-isolate. They should not return to work for at least 10 days after symptoms first started **and** 24 hours (1 full day) after fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medicines **and** symptoms have improved, whichever is longer. You could offer telework assignments if the employee is well enough to work.

**IMPORTANT:** You must protect the confidentiality of your employee. Legally, you cannot identify the employee by name. DO NOT disclose to other staff or third parties the name or other personal or health information of the employee who tested positive for COVID-19.

Thoroughly clean and disinfect equipment and other elements of the work environment of the employee, along with frequently touched surfaces and objects such as doorknobs/push bars, elevator buttons, restroom doors, etc. Use EPA-approved disinfectants and use according to label instructions.

If the employee had been working while ill, identify co-workers and individuals that the employee may have come into close contact with. A close contact is defined as a person who had been within 6 feet of the positive employee for greater than 15 minutes while the employee had symptoms. The exposed co-workers identified as close contacts should self-quarantine at home for 14 days following close contact with the COVID-19 positive person. (See previous section for self-quarantine exemptions.)

If an employee develops symptoms, they should follow the return to work guidelines (10 days after symptoms started and 1 day after fever has resolved and symptoms improved, whichever is longer).

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\*"Food-selling establishment" means grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants that sell groceries or food available for takeout, and any other business that sells food.

### **One of our employees has a “suspected” (but unconfirmed) case of COVID-19. What should I do?**

Encourage the employee to be tested for COVID-19. Until results are available, follow the same steps outlined for an employee who tested positive for COVID-19. The employee should stay home for 10 days after symptoms started and 1 day after fever has resolved and symptoms improved, whichever is longer.

Thoroughly clean and disinfect equipment and other elements of the work environment of the employee, along with frequently touched surfaces and objects such as doorknobs/push bars, elevator buttons, restroom doors, etc. Use EPA-approved disinfectants and use according to label instructions.

Identify co-workers and individuals that the employee may have come into close contact with while ill. A close contact is defined as those individuals who had been within 6 feet of the affected employee for greater than 15 minutes while the employee had symptoms. The exposed co-workers identified as close contacts should self-quarantine at home for 14 days following close contact with the COVID-19 positive person. (See page 2 for quarantine exemptions.)

If an employee develops symptoms, they should follow the return to work guidelines (10 days after symptoms started and 1 day after fever has resolved and symptoms improved, whichever is longer).

### **An employee’s family member has a suspected/confirmed case of COVID-19. What should I do?**

The employee should self-quarantine at home for 14 days following close contact with the COVID-19 positive person. (See page 2 for quarantine exemptions.)

If an employee develops symptoms, they should follow the return to work guidelines (10 days after symptoms started and 1 day after fever has resolved and symptoms improved, whichever is longer).

### **An employee has reported that they came into contact with someone believed to be positive for COVID-19. What should I do?**

This depends on the exposure and the employee’s work. It’s also important to remember we have “community spread” of COVID-19, which means there is an ongoing risk of exposure in the community.

Review the nature of the exposure. If the contact occurred within 6 feet of the ill individual for more than 10 minutes, the employee is considered a close contact. The employee should self-quarantine at home for 14 days following close contact with the COVID-19 positive person. (See page 2 for quarantine exemptions.)

If the employee develops symptoms, they should follow the return to work guidelines (10 days after symptoms started and 1 day after fever has resolved and symptoms improved, whichever is longer).

### **What do I do when my employee shows up to work ill or becomes ill at work?**

If an employee comes to work ill, or becomes ill while at work, they should be directed to go home immediately, even if their symptoms are mild. If they are having trouble breathing or cannot keep fluids down, have them contact their doctor right away.

Thoroughly clean and disinfect equipment and other elements of the work environment of the employee, along with frequently touched surfaces and objects such as doorknobs/push bars, elevator buttons, restroom doors, etc. Use EPA-approved disinfectants and use according to label instructions.

If the employee had been working while ill, identify co-workers and individuals that the employee may have come into close contact with. A close contact is defined as a person who had been within 6 feet of the affected employee for greater than 15 minutes while the employee had symptoms. The exposed co-workers identified as close contacts should self-quarantine at home for 14 days following close contact with the COVID-19 positive person. (See page 2 for quarantine exemptions.)

If an employee develops symptoms, they should follow the return to work guidelines (10 days after symptoms started and 1 day after fever has resolved and symptoms improved, whichever is longer).

## When can my employee come back to work if they had symptoms of illness?

Employees who have been ill with COVID-19 symptoms including fever, cough (excluding chronic cough due to medical reason other than COVID-19), shortness of breath, sore throat, or diarrhea (excluding diarrhea due to known medical reason other than COVID-19), can return to work 10 days after symptoms started **and** at least 24 hours (1 full day) after fever has resolved without the use of fever reducing medications and symptoms have greatly improved, whichever is longer.

Note that these COVID-19 symptoms can often be accompanied by chills, shivering, muscle aches, headaches, or new smell or taste disorders. Or in some cases, these additional symptoms can be the only symptoms that are present. Any symptom that is unusual for the person is reason for concern.

## If an employee who has mild symptoms tests negative, when can they go back to work?

If an employee is ill with mild symptoms that improve in a short period of time, and that person also tests negative for COVID-19, the individual can return to work. They do not have to continue to stay at home for the 10 full days after symptoms begin.

## How do I count the 10 days of isolation or 14 days of quarantine?

For **isolation (sick individual)**, the day the individual first showed symptoms of illness is “Day 0.” Count 10 days past that date for the return-to-work date. Be sure that the employee also has 24 hours (1 full day) of no fever and a improvement in symptoms.

- **Example:** Employee developed fever 4/14/20 (Day 0). Fever went away on its own 4/16/20. Employee has no other symptoms. Employee can return to work 4/25/20 (Day 11, which is 10 full days after illness began and at least 1 day after fever stopped).

For **quarantine (exposed to a COVID-19 positive person or traveled)**, the day the individual returned from travel or the last day the person was exposed to the positive individual is “Day 0.” Count 14 days past that date for the return-to-work-date.

- **Example:** Employee returned from Florida on 4/14/20 (Day 0). Employee can return to work 4/29/20 (Day 15, which is 14 full days after exposure).
- **Note:** If the employee develops symptoms while in quarantine, they must then revert to the 10 days past symptoms and 1 day without symptoms to return to work. See isolation example.

## What types of tests are available for COVID-19?

There are two types of tests available for COVID-19. A diagnostic test (also called viral test or PCR) tests for current infection. An antibody test or serology test looks for past infection.

## Should I get a diagnostic test?

If you have any symptoms or are working in person, get a diagnostic test to check for current infection.

## Can I get a diagnostic test without symptoms?

Yes. But remember a negative diagnostic test only means you were not infected on the day of the test. Continue to practice prevention measures to protect yourself and others.

## What should I do while waiting for diagnostic COVID-19 test results?

If you have any symptoms or were exposed to someone who's tested positive for COVID-19:

- Stay at home except to get medical care.
- Stay away from other people in your home.
  - Use a separate room and bathroom if possible.
  - Wear a mask if you go into shared spaces.
  - Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.
  - Contact the Health Department if you need temporary housing (517-541-2675).
- Call ahead before visiting a doctor. See [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/index.html) for information on managing your symptoms and when to get medical care.

- Make a list of anyone you came in contact with 48 hours before your symptoms started, or since you were exposed.

If you have no symptoms and no known contact with someone who's tested positive:

- Still try to stay away from others as much as possible.
- Keep track of anyone you come in close contact with after your test, as well as 48 hours before your test.

### Should I get an antibody test?

Barry-Eaton District Health Department DOES NOT recommend antibody testing at this time. If you do get an antibody test, we strongly recommend both an antibody test and a diagnostic test.

### What happens if I test positive for antibodies?

There are currently many unknowns regarding COVID-19 antibody testing. It is not clear how accurate available testing is or if it tells us anything about future immunity to COVID-19. Antibody tests should not be used to make individual health decisions, such as returning to work. We don't know if a positive antibody test means you are immune to future COVID-19 infection. Do not assume a positive antibody result means you're immune to COVID-19. Please continue to protect yourself and others with social distancing, face coverings, handwashing and other prevention measures.

### Where can I get tested?

In Barry and Eaton Counties, most testing sites are using diagnostic tests and a small number are also offering antibody testing. Check with your health care provider or see [MDHHS' Test Finder](#) for testing locations across the district.

### Are all employees required to be tested for COVID-19?

No. Essential workers are now part of a prioritization group for testing, but there is no testing requirement. This prioritization allows essential workers to be tested if supplies and testing capacity are available. Some local testing locations will test asymptomatic individuals. Workers should call testing locations before going to see if people without symptoms will be tested.

### If an employee doesn't have symptoms but is tested for COVID-19, what do the test results mean?

- **Positive diagnostic test:** The individual should self-isolate for 10 days from date of test. If no symptoms develop, they can return to work after those 10 days. If an employee develops symptoms, they should follow the return to work guidelines (10 days after symptoms started and 1 day after fever has resolved and symptoms improved, whichever is longer). Health Department staff will also be in touch with you to conduct contact tracing and to connect you with needed resources during isolation.
- **Negative diagnostic test:** No action is needed. Just remember this is a point in time for the test. The individual could have been recently exposed and tested negative or could become exposed after testing.

Businesses can continue to practice the 14-day quarantine period for workers who have traveled or who have been identified as a close contact.

## Personal protective equipment (PPE)

### What type of PPE should I wear?

Healthcare workers should wear N95 masks. For appropriate use, N95 masks must be fit tested annually to ensure protection. Surgical masks can be worn by those not in direct care of a patient or providing treatment that cause aerosolization. Healthcare workers may also need to wear gloves, surgical masks along with a face shield (if N95 not available), gowns, and goggles.

Cloth masks, scarfs, bandanas, or handkerchiefs can be worn by employees, volunteers, and the public.

Some people are choosing to wear disposable gloves as they perform everyday tasks. However, gloves don't make sense for most people to wear. Using your ungloved hands - and then washing them often - is the best bet for the typical tasks of everyday life. Wearing gloves might also create a false sense of security, lead to less attention to hand washing, or contribute to cross-contamination removing gloves or reusing gloves.

### **Do customers need to wear masks?**

Any individual who is able to medically tolerate a face covering **must** wear a covering over the nose and mouth when in any enclosed public space. In addition, any individual who is able to medically tolerate a face covering **must** wear a covering over the nose and mouth when entering a food-selling establishment or pharmacy. Face coverings can include a homemade cloth mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief.

### **Do my employees have to wear masks at work?**

Masks can help prevent asymptomatic people from infecting others. Employers **must** supply masks to all employees. Cloth masks are acceptable, as surgical masks should be reserved for those in health care. Based on current executive orders, there are some situations which require or specifically recommend masks:

- Any individual (employees and customers) able to medically tolerate a face covering **must** wear a covering over his or her nose and mouth, such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief, when in any enclosed public space.
- Employees who are not able to consistently maintain six feet of separation from other individuals in the workplace **must** wear a mask. (In addition, employees who are not able to consistently maintain three feet of separation from other individuals in the workplace **should consider** wearing face shields.)
- Employees working in a food establishment or pharmacy **must** wear a mask (hosts, servers, and kitchen staff in accordance with FDA guidelines).
- Employees who traveled but are still allowed to work **should** wear a mask for 14 days following travel.
- Employees who had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 but who are still allowed to work **should** wear a mask at work for 14 days after last exposure to the person.

We **strongly recommend** that all employees wear masks while at work, if they are medically able to tolerate wearing one. Please encourage employees to wear masks, particularly if they will be in contact with other employees or the public, or if they work in areas where 6-foot social distancing is difficult to be maintained. Employers can also establish guidelines that require their employees to wear masks.

### **How often should I change my surgical or N95 masks?**

Surgical masks should be thrown away after each shift. N95 masks should be used according to the healthcare facility's policy and manufacturer's instructions. If at any time your mask becomes soiled or crushed, it should be removed, discarded, and a new mask used. Hand hygiene must be followed when putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) a mask.

### **How should I wear and care for a cloth face covering?**

A cloth face covering like a mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief should cover both your mouth and nose and allow for breathing without restriction. The face covering should also include multiple layers of fabric/cloth. Masks should be secured with ties or ear loops. Hand hygiene must be followed when putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) a mask. Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. Depending on type of cloth mask, you may get over 30 washings. Be careful when drying the fabric. The shape of cloth face coverings should never change or shrink.

## **Hand hygiene & respiratory etiquette**

### **What should I do if visitors or customers have symptoms of illness, such as coughing or sneezing?**

Customers are required to wear a face covering, such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief, when in any enclosed public space, if they can medically tolerate one.

Employees should follow strict social distancing guidance and maintain at least a 6-foot distance from anyone, especially those who are having symptoms. If your employee must be closer to the customer, advise them to minimize time spent with symptomatic customers to less than 10 minutes, if possible. Be sure to provide the public with tissues and trash receptacles. Have a no-touch hand sanitizer dispenser near customer entrances.

### **Is hand sanitizer equal to washing your hands?**

There are important differences between washing hands with soap and water and using hand sanitizer. Washing hands with warm running water and soap is preferred whenever available. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers don't kill ALL types of germs, such as a stomach bug called norovirus, some parasites, hepatitis A, and *Clostridium difficile*, which causes severe diarrhea. Hand sanitizers also may not remove harmful chemicals such as pesticides and heavy metals like lead. Handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs, pesticides, and metals on hands.

Fortunately, alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can kill the virus that causes COVID-19. Hand sanitizer should be used when running water hand washing is not available or practical. For example, hand sanitizer could be used after checking out at a grocery store cash register or moving between workstations in a factory.

### **What's the correct way to wash your hands?**

When washing your hands, wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Scrub all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, fingers, between your fingers, and under your nails. Keep scrubbing for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice. Rinse your hands under clean, running water. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them. Handwashing materials and posters are [available online](#).

### **What's the correct way to use hand sanitizer?**

Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and childcare facilities. Apply enough product on hands to cover all surfaces. Rub hands together, until hands feel dry. This should take around 20 seconds. Do not rinse or wipe off the hand sanitizer before it's dry.

## **Cleaning & disinfection**

### **What should I use to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces?**

Wear reusable or disposable gloves for routine cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc. Clean surfaces using soap and water, then use disinfectant. Cleaning with soap and water reduces number of germs, dirt, and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces. Be sure to wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after removing gloves.

For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are specifically [EPA-approved](#) for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, and contact time, etc.).

Consider using wipeable covers for electronics. If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry these surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Any product to be used for cleaning or disinfecting should have [Safety Data Sheets](#) (formerly known as Material Safety Data Sheets or MSDS), provided with the product or available online. The information must be shared with employees. Appropriate training must be given to employees on safe handling and use of the product, potential health effects of product use, and personal protective equipment.

## If I can't locate specific EPA-approved cleaners, or wipes, etc., what can I use to clean surfaces?

A simple diluted bleach water solution is effective against the COVID-19 virus. Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing, may not be suitable for disinfection. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. **Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleaner.** To make a bleach solution, mix 5 tablespoons (1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup) bleach per gallon of water OR 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water. Wipe the solution on the surface to be disinfected. Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute. Bleach solutions should be made fresh every 24 hours.

## Policies

### Should [high-risk employees](#) (over age 65, compromised immune system, etc.) stay home?

It depends on their risk exposure at work. There should be strong consideration for staying at home (or limiting direct contact with other people) if they have high risk conditions. Offer flexible leave policies to these employees. If an employee chooses to stay home due to an immunocompromised condition, there are certain unemployment benefits that may be available. Consider temporarily assigning employees at high risk for complications from coronavirus to duties that don't involve close contact with the public or other employees.

### What can I do to help keep staff and customers safe?

Ensure that employees and customers limit close contact (stay 6 feet apart). Create a physical barrier between customers and staff that ensures 6 feet of distance at routine points of contact (e.g. purchase point). In areas of high-volume traffic, utilize spacing tools for checks and lines. For example, put tape on the floor to keep people adequately spaced, or place arrows in the aisle to direct the flow of movement in one direction. Provide services by appointment. Provide order, electronic payment and curbside pickup or delivery options. Limit the number of people in the establishment at one time. Deliver services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web). Reconfigure retail space to enable people to be located at least 6 feet apart (e.g. reduce the amount of inventory on the floor, use smaller displays, strategically place inventory).

Provide soap and water in the workplace. Place hand sanitizers at entrance to encourage hand hygiene among customers entering the retail establishment. Provide masks and/or cloth face shields to employees. Require staff (and customers when possible) to wear a non-medical cloth mask covering their face and mouth. Conduct daily checks for symptoms of illness and ensure employees stay home when they are sick with fever, coughing, sneezing or unusual symptoms.

Discourage workers from sharing phones, desks, keyboards, cash registers or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect equipment before and after use. Establish staggered lunch and break times for staff. Promote community health by placing posters that encourage hand hygiene to help stop the spread at the entrance of business and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen. Use frequent communication with staff to encourage the use of all protective measures.

## Resources

COVID-19 guidance and requirements are being continually developed. For local information, contact the [Barry-Eaton District Health Department](#) at 517-541-2617 or 269-798-4149.

- See the [Michigan COVID-19 Business Response Center](#) for industry-specific plans and guidance.
- For the most up-to-date guidance on COVID-19, visit the following sources of official information:
  - Barry-Eaton District: [barryeatonhealth.org/coronavirusworkplace](http://barryeatonhealth.org/coronavirusworkplace)
  - Michigan: [michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://michigan.gov/coronavirus)
  - National: [cdc.gov/COVID19](http://cdc.gov/COVID19)